

Fallout: Liberty Nation

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Summary: After the Sole Survivor sided with the Railroad and defeated the Institute, she finds that retiring as a hero to the Commonwealth is not going as she'd planned. Raising a ten year old synth boy in the heart of Diamond City with her journalist girlfriend is proving to be difficult. There are rumblings of unity among the settlements but not everyone wants to rebuild the Commonwealth.

## 1. Sole Survivor's Intro

They call me the Sole Survivor. On October 23, 2077, my family and I were ushered from our home in Sanctuary Hills to Vault 111. My husband and son were bundled into one decontamination chamber while I was taken to another. But that was just a cover. All of it. The husband and son. The decontamination chamber. None of it was real. My marriage was one of political necessity. My child was borne of one night of weakness with Nate and a woman whose name I chose not to learn. And the decontamination chamber put me into a cryogenically frozen state for 210 years.

If I've survived anything, it was a life of lies. The world I'd awoken to may not have been the one I'd have chosen but it was the only one in which I could be free. Seeing Nate in that frigid tomb along with all of my neighbors, me and Shaun the only two inhabitants that would escape it alive, was downright horrifying. The truth is, sometimes when I close my eyes at night, I see their peaceful faces. Other times, I see Nate's contorted in fear. Fear for me and Shaun. In either case, I wake up in a cold sweat and reach across the bed for comfort.

Fortunately, comfort is never far away. Piper Wright sleeps beside me nearly every night. When she feels me reaching for her, she turns over in her sleep and burrows into my arms. With her dark hair pressed firmly under my chin, all it takes is the gentle rhythm of her breathing against me to lull me back into slumber. It's the simple things in life, really.

Settling down in Diamond City had been Piper's idea and it was a good one. Her sister attended school and now that I had taken the ten year old synth version of my son from the Institute, it made sense to send him there as well. We haven't told Nat Shaun's a synth yet. As of right now, the only person who knows is Piper. I'm sure the secret is killing her but so far, she's agreed that despite the Institute having been shut down for good, the existence of synths still frighten most people. If Shaun is ever to have a chance at a real life, no one can ever know his origin.

It's been a few months since I teamed up with the Railroad, an underground organization dedicated to freeing the synths, to take down the Institute from the inside. Saying goodbye to my son before destroying everything he'd built... it was like losing him the first time. I owed it to his legacy, misguided as it was, to raise the synth boy with the same integrity the man he was modeled after had. Only this time, he would have his mother's hand to guide him.

They call me the Sole Survivor. Once, I was a wife, mother and lawyer. Now I'm a hero of the Commonwealth. And my story's not yet over.

## 2. Chapter 1

"Blue!" It was Piper's voice that I first fell in love with. She had been locked out of Diamond City for writing an article that the former Mayor McDonough did not approve of. I encountered her yelling into an intercom and was hooked. Only Piper had suspected the truth and didn't back down even when the odds were against her. It's her tenacity I admire most. She'd have made a good lawyer.

She's calling to me from the first level of Publick Occurrences. I already know what this is about so I remain quiet upstairs. I can hear Codsworth down there giving Piper my itinerary for the coming days. I haven't told her that I'm headed to the Castle right after dropping Nat and Shaun off at school. Things are complicated in Diamond City right now with McDonough out of the picture. Piper's been not so subtly hinting that the next mayor of the walled city might have 210 extra years' worth of life experience to bring to the table. It's flattering, but my responsibilities with the Railroad and the Minutemen keep me very busy.

As a matter of fact, it's the reason I'm headed to the Castle. It's about time I put the Minutemen back in the hands of the people. I was there in a time of crisis but I never sought this kind of leadership. Now that I have my son back, I just want to raise him in peace. Preston Garvey or Ronnie Shaw would be better suited for the role of general.

"Blue! We need to talk!"

I turn away from the dingy mirror after pulling my silver hair into a ponytail. Two centuries in cryostasis had somehow damaged the the pigmentation in my hair. I was self-conscious about it until I'd spent about a day in the Commonwealth wasteland. First, when you're trying to survive ghouls, super mutants and raiders, your hair is the last thing on your mind. Second, well, have you seen the way some people wear theirs? Yikes. Premature gray was the least of my

worries. Finding clean clothes in the wasteland was perhaps the most of my worries. Oddly, dry-cleaning wasn't an industry that survived the apocalypse. I've managed to scavenge and buy some clean garments. For the journey, I'd decided on a pair of military fatigues and boots with a matching cap. Simple, comfortable, durable. It's a long walk to the Castle.

Light footsteps bounce up the stairs. My son's smiling face greets me as he approaches. This kid. I'd overcome the horrors of Vault 111, traipsed across a nightmare version of the Commonwealth I had loved and killed many people in an effort to find him. He is my entire life and if I had to do it all over again, from the loveless marriage all the way through destroying the misguided Institution he grew to create, I would choose it in a heartbeat. Our life here is one I could never have imagined in 2077. The losses we'd had to accept were heartbreaking, but the paradise we've carved out for ourselves here in Diamond City somehow made it right.

"Piper's gonna blow a gasket if you don't come downstairs," Shaun informs me even as he's wrapping his arms around my waist. We hug and I'm once again reminded of the advances in technology that made this hug possible. To feel him in my arms, I would never guess in a million years that my son is a synthetic boy. He is warm and full of life. It's hard to imagine that this is the result of decades' worth of science. He passes as human. His teachers, peers and neighbors don't suspect a thing. Why would they? None of us would ever give them a reason to.

"I know, kiddo." I give Shaun's hair a tussle. "I'm gonna be out of town for a few days. You be good for Nat and Piper, okay?"

Shaun frowns and rolls his eyes. "Nat's barely older than me."

"Them's the breaks," I tell him as sympathetically as I can. "Go on to class now. I'll be home before you know it."

Shaun's frown is already gone as he heads back downstairs. "Bye, Mom! See you later!"

He is a good, sweet, thoughtful boy. I love him so much.

But now, it's time to settle things down with the other love of my life.

I descend into the main area of Publick Occurrences. Nat and Shaun are out the door and Piper, beautiful, sweet Piper, is standing before me, hands on her hips. "Hello, my love."

"Don't you '\_hello, my love\_' me, Blue." The tone in her voice is a warning. No more sweet talk. "You're \_walking\_ to the Castle?"

I blink. That was not what I was expecting. "Yes?"

Piper reached up and rubbed her temples with the index and middle fingers of both hands. "You're famous now! And you made powerful enemies with any Institute survivors or Brotherhood of Steel remnants. You can't just walk across the Commonwealth like some kind of rube! What are you thinking?"

"Piper, I've left Diamond City before," I tell her, still not understanding the problem. "I've proven to be far more capable than most out there."

Piper was quiet a moment. She looked down at the ground, shaking her head, before saying, "You've just been here so long... I sorta thought we were settling down, you know? If something happened to you out there..."

Sweet, silly, insecure Piper. I lift a hand to touch her cheek and she looks up at me. She smiles shyly just before I give her a soft kiss. "Piper, settling down with you is only thing that I want. Trust me, I'm just going to relieve myself of my Minutemen responsibilities. Then it's me, you and the kids."

"Leave the Minutemen?" Piper gasps. It only occurs to me now that this perhaps should have been a conversation we'd had earlier. She's pushed away from me and is taking a step back. "You can't. They were practically dead before you found them. And all the settlements they protect, Blue, it's all because of you."

I'm at a loss for words. I look at her and can tell she's genuinely conflicted. The truth is, so am I. I know I've done good things for the Commonwealth but it can't be anything anyone else could have done. I was just looking for my son and found myself getting involved in every major crisis in the wasteland. I never wanted to be a hero.

"What do you think I should do?" I finally ask.

Piper shrugs. "I dunno. I just want you to be safe. But I don't want the Commonwealth to go back to the lawless hellhole it was before you showed up."

At that, I smile. There's my girl. Piper knows that the greater good requires some sacrifices. Maybe we can find a way to keep our little family together and still make a difference. I close the distance between us and wrap my arms around the Diamond City journalist. "We'll find a way, Piper. I promise."

Piper leaned hard into my hug. "I know we will, Blue. But, until then, will you at least take someone with you? As back-up?"

"How about I see if Deacon is up for an adventure then?"

### 3. Chapter 2

"The old ball and chain needed the savior of the Commonwealth to hire an escort, eh?"

Deacon's kind of an asshole. I try to remember that he's had it tougher than most, but sometimes, he takes it just a bit too far. "Don't say that about Piper, please."

The man's lopsided grin faded. "Sorry, Wanderer," he apologized, using my Railroad alias. It's meant to show his respect to me. I led the Railroad in a massive synth escape from the Institute. The Commonwealth had never felt collectively safer since the explosion at C.I.T. It was now a kind of honorific for the Railroad. "So, uh, got

a big Minuteman meeting?"

I nod but shrug. "It's definitely not the meeting I thought I'd be having when I woke up today." After a moment, I ask, "What do you think about unifying the Commonwealth?"

Deacon laughs hard, only to cut himself off when he sees that I'm not laughing with him. The laugh dissolves into a cough and he pounds his chest with his fist. "Seriously? Man, I know you're General of those guys, but you're not really buying into their crazy idea of trying to govern this God-forsaken wasteland, are you?"

"What's so crazy about unification, Deacon?" I ask. We've got four hours to wax philosophic, after all. And chances are, he's got an opinion on the matter.

Boy, does he.

Deacon has decided to go for the "dirty wastelander" disguise today. His Brahmin skin shirt really stinks of Brahmin shit. It's disgusting but Deacon is very dedicated to his disguises. Unfortunately, he doesn't seem to notice me inching away from him while he talks. It's going to be a nightmare trying to wash this stench off. I miss 21st century showers.

"Look, what has gathering large groups of people and trying to tell them to do anything ever gotten the world?" Deacon waved his arms wildly. "We live in a literal hell. You know more than anyone alive what was lost." I try to hide my surprise at this reasoning. It's like he was reading my mind. "What possible good can come from trying to herd these sheep into one pen?"

"Sheep?"

Deacon chuckles and shakes his head. "The people of the Commonwealth are helpless, dumb animals. And the Minutemen are reactionaries. They respond to problems, not prevent them."

"What about the Railroad? I agree that the Minutemen lack some organization, but maybe with some assistance from the Railroad..." I trail off when I see Deacon shaking his head again.

"You know, I love the Railroad. It's given me purpose when I didn't think I had anything to live for," Deacon says, his voice soft with some memory washing over him. He's looking off in the distance at the ruined landscape. It's a beautiful late morning and the walk is actually pretty pleasant. But Deacon doesn't see any of that through those ever-present sunglasses. He clears his throat and continues, "but do you really think the Commonwealth can trust an organization that's been so shrouded in secrecy?"

Now it's my turn to shake my head. "The Railroad's no Institute."

"No, I'm not saying that," Deacon replies. "But the cloak and dagger stuff, that's our thing. There's no way we'd be able to lead, even if we wanted-"

Deacon freezes and his hand hovers at the breast of his jacket. I follow his cue and reach for the Deliverer at my hip. Deacon had

given it to me some time ago, when I was still just beginning to help the Railroad out. It's my favorite weapon, if I have to use one at all. I'd rather talk my way out of a conflict, ever the recovering lawyer, but I'd come to adapt to the Commonwealth's way of handling things.

A few heartbeats later, I finally hear what Deacon does. A low growl and a rustle to my right tells me there's some animal headed toward us. My gun's barely raised when a vicious dog launches from the bushes. His yellow teeth gnash as he takes a silent 10mm to the brain. He's down and Deacon is shooting down one more of his pack. They're barking now, yowling from all around. They must have surrounded us while we were talking. I can only blame myself as three more dogs rush from their hiding places behind Corvega remains and the rubble of an old gas station. I spend way too much time focusing on my companion than my surroundings.

"Keep your head in the game, Wanderer!" Deacon snaps as he puts a bullet in the mutt right behind me. "They're fucking everywhere!"

The Deliverer is silent as it puts down two more of the curs. Behind me, Deacon is shooting down the last, a big mean looking dog that looks like he's been stuffed in a barrel full of radiation for 200 years. The mongrel explodes in a storm of blood and visceral. I have to look away or I'll throw up.

Deacon gives me a pat on the shoulder. "Maybe we should have this conversation later?"

I sigh and holster the Deliverer. "You're probably right, Deacon." I got what I wanted out of him anyway. Not everyone, even the people in my inner circle, can see the value of unification.

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